Before Watergate Break-in

G. O. P. Tried to Bug Office: McGovern

BY FRED FARRAR
Chicago Tribune Press Service

ALBUQUERQUE, N. M., Sept. 9—Sen. George McGovern charged today that people representing the Nixon reelection forces attempted to bug his headquarters in Washington last May 23.

But, he said, they were foiled by a young volunteer who was sleeping in the doorway of the headquarters.

"Changed Their Mind"

McGovern said the attempt came at approximately 3 a. m. on that date when "two carloads of people" pulled up before his headquarters, then at 410 1st St. SE in Washington, and got out of the cars.

"Fortunately, someone was sleeping in the doorway and other volunteers were working inside. And apparently, that combination was enough to make them change their mind," McGovern said.

Asked how he knew that the people were intent upon bugging the headquarters, McGovern said, "Well, we have that information from our source."

Asked who his source was, McGovern said, "I can't disclose that now."

"But I can tell you it's a fact. You'll just have to take in on faith."

Asked why he didn't disclose it earlier, the Democratic Presidential nominee said because "I didn't know about it at the time."

Takes Rest Break

He made the charge during a press conference here, where he is taking a rest break in his current two-week campaign tour.

The South Dakota senator said the alleged incident was another example of "ethical and moral questions" that have been raised by the arrest last June of four men apparently attempting to wiretap the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate complex in Washington.

"It now appears that the headquarters of one of the two major political parties in the United States was treated . . . as if it were the headquarters of a foreign government," he said.

Seeks Independent Quiz

McGovern repeated his call for an independent investigation to probe the alleged bugging incident. He said he questions the ability of the Justice Department to make an impartial investigation.

In other remarks, McGovern defended his credibility, and said he regretted that what he considers his strongest asset is being questioned by some members of the news media.

On other questions, McGovern said:

- It "has been an up and down week, but generally good," adding that the difficulties within his campaign organization are "very minor by comparison" with the resignation of top Nixon operatives, including former campaign manager John Mitchell.
- That he understands "the anguish and the anger" behind Israel's retaliation raids in Lebanon and Syria, but declined to give "any approval" of what took place.